

**ADJOURNED CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
CITY OF WATERTOWN**

**July 30, 2012**

**6:00 p.m.**

**Mayor Jeffrey E. Graham Presiding**

**Present:** Council Member Roxanne M. Burns  
Council Member Joseph M. Butler, Jr.  
Council Member Teresa R. Macaluso  
Council Member Jeffrey M. Smith  
Mayor Graham

**Also Present:** Sharon Addison, City Manager

**City staff present:** Elliott Nelson, Ken Mix, Erin Gardner, Kurt Hauk

The City Manager presented the following reports to Council:

- Discussion of proposals for Aviary and improvements to the Children's Zoo
- Tour of Thompson Park Zoo Areas

**Complete Reports on file in the office of the City Clerk**

**DISCUSSIONS**

**Discussion of proposals for Aviary and improvements to the Children's Zoo and Tour of Thompson Park Zoo Areas**

**John Wright**, Executive Director of Thompson Park Zoo thanked Council for meeting with the Thompson Park Conservancy and stated the goal is to give back to the community by redeveloping the Aviary to a more educational open-aided pavilion and updating the Children's Zoo. He said that the packet handed out contains conceptual ideas and they would like to tell the story of Jefferson County agriculture and its historical importance. He mentioned that he has spoken with Bill Wood from the Jefferson County Historical Museum to learn about historical agricultural events in this area, such as the invention of the plow. Also, he would like to incorporate an old water trough similar to what was on Factory Street. He reviewed the pictures in the packet and highlighted the Adirondack theme and log furniture, which shows the importance of the lumber industry, as well as interactive garden beds. In regards to the barn, Mr. Wright told Council that a historical barn could be relocated and restored with the help of funding from a Barn Preservation Grant. He stressed that he would like the area to be more interactive so children can crawl over, play with and manipulate everything while maintaining a farming theme.

Mayor Graham referred to the configuration of the pavilion in place of the Aviary and stated that should be the first thing that is agreed upon. He would prefer they gravitated towards a predesigned structure and Engineering can do the pad and infrastructure in order to save time.

**Bob Gorman**, President of the Thompson Park Conservancy indicated that he asked Mr. Wright to provide an overview of the buildings in regards to the City's responsibility because the zoo is considering applying for the AZA accreditation and there may need to be maintenance done on some of the buildings.

Mr. Wright stressed that the AZA wants to see community support which this project shows and assurance that the buildings are maintained. He advised that he is already working with Erin Gardner, Parks and Recreation Superintendent and Mike Lumbis, City Planner so that the zoo is proactive in order to ensure the budgeting is in place and nothing has to be done on an emergency basis.

Council Member Butler asked how long the accreditation process will take.

Mr. Wright remarked that the objective for this year is to establish the zoo better financially and with the long-term projected security in the zoo's exhibits, he is campaigning businesses to support an exhibit for five years. He added that the AZA accreditation looks at the business side of the zoo as well. He advised that he still needs to sit with the Board to determine that this is the path that the zoo is going but mentioned that the general consensus is to proceed cautiously until the overall commitment is decided.

Mr. Gorman explained that the zoo is also looking at the animals to decide if something should be subbed-out and reviewing the large area towards the other end of the zoo without facilities.

Mr. Wright clarified that the zoo only has the areas inside the fence.

In regards to the current architecture, Council Member Butler asked if there is a common theme in place.

Mr. Wright responded that the theme could involve the lakes, river or Adirondacks but needs to tell a story and meet the zoo's mission statement through educational programs.

Council Member Butler asked if the pavilion will be the centerpiece of the education.

Mr. Wright replied that it will be a strong complimentary part of the educational program during the better seasons of the year.

Mr. Gorman mentioned that there are a lot of people that utilize the concession stand but there is not enough seating so the pavilion with help in that regard.

Mr. Wright explained that this creates a captive audience allowing the zoo to do impromptu educational presentations while people are eating.

Council Member Butler asked if there will be audio-visual equipment installed in the pavilion.

Mr. Wright indicated that it would not be conducive to video equipment but there may be a small sound system. He noted that more AV equipment such as smart boards would be nice in the Education Room in the Administration Building so that webinars can be done with local school districts.

Council Member Butler questioned whether the pavilion should be bigger.

Mr. Wright stated that the area staked out may be suited for 100 people but that is not a realistic number. He explained that groups are usually scheduled for 30 people at a time and advised that smaller environments satisfy the guests better.

Council Member Butler asked if the seating will be portable.

Mr. Wright said that has not been discussed but it would be nice to have it somewhat portable to accommodate a stage.

Mayor Graham mentioned that the J.B. Wise Pavilion was just completed and that the City was comfortable with the cost and wondered if there would be any variation in cost.

**Kurt Hauk**, City Engineer explained the dimensions that were staked out and expressed that it would be 2,100 square feet. In regards to materials, he commented that his largest concern would be maintainability and noted that there is a longer life cycle with a metal building.

Council proceeded to tour the proposed areas at 6:22 p.m.

During the tour, Mr. Hauk further explained and defined the dimensions of the area for the new pavilion.

Mr. Wright told Council that the pavilion would be easily accessible to the bathrooms and concession stand in the Administration Building. He pointed out the area that houses all the utilities and stressed that it needs to be incorporated into the design.

Mayor Graham asked if the ground would be pavers or a stamped concrete.

Mr. Wright advised that it would be better to have a full slab of concrete with a basic brushed finish. He added that it could be dyed which helps with algae and it could be pressure washed for cleaning purposes.

In regards to the Children's Zoo, Mr. Wright showed Council the areas that could be used for the agricultural ideas that he discussed highlighting the raised beds for planting, the location of a watermill and the possibilities for the barn. He vowed to maintain some old items of the zoo such as the dolphin, turtle and trough and work them into the plan. He stressed that the challenge is that people think that a Children's Zoo is a petting zoo but said that the USDA regulation mandates that there can be no interaction with animals without supervision.

Mayor Graham stated that specifications for the pavilion should be decided first and the details of the Children's Zoo could be worked out over time. He asked if Mr. Hauk should put the demolition costs within the bid.

Council Member Macaluso asked if the Zoo Board has a certain design in mind and are they leaning more towards the Adirondack theme.

Mr. Wright replied that the Board would like a more natural look similar to the entrance of the zoo. He mentioned that there are metal structures that appear to look like wood and are low maintenance.

Referring to the examples in the packet, Council Member Macaluso said that she liked the design with the blue roof and thought it would fit in with the zoo.

Mayor Graham noted that the stone accents on the pillars looked nice and wondered if the stone accents throughout the park could be replicated.

Mr. Wright informed Council that on some of the designs, canvas panels could be rolled down during bad weather to provide shelter.

Mr. Hauk said the next step would be to decide if the material would be metal, wood or a hybrid then put the specs together in order to contact suppliers. He also needs to know if there is an agreement on the size.

Mayor Graham asked if Mr. Hauk and the Zoo Board could work together in order to get a bid out by Labor Day.

Mr. Wright remarked that once the cost of the Aviary is settled and he knows the amount of extra support available from the City, he can solidify the plans for the Children's Zoo and seek matching grants. He stressed that if everything is too rushed then he might lose opportunities to get additional funding.

**Sharon Addison**, City Manager said that she will ask Mr. Hauk to meet with Mr. Wright and Mr. Gorman to put together a design so that it can be put to bid. She also stressed that it is important to stay within a budget.

Council Member Burns mentioned that originally the demolition was to be done by City staff and asked if that could still be done.

Mr. Hauk advised that DPW could do the demolition work.

In response Council Member Butler's inquiry, Mr. Wright stated that a larger footprint would affect the root system of the trees.

Council Member Butler requested that a small group consisting of representatives from Council, the Zoo Board and City staff work on finalizing the design so that it is something that all parties agree upon.

Council Member Smith suggested that the committee remember that this is an Olmsted Park and that needs to be considered when formulating the design.

Council concurred that a committee should be created and move ahead with picking a design.

## **A D J O U R N M E N T**

**At the call of the chair, meeting was duly adjourned at 6:57 p.m. by motion of Mayor Jeffrey E. Graham, seconded by Council Member Jeffrey M. Smith and carried with all voting in favor thereof.**

**Ann M. Saunders**  
City Clerk